



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

March 1, 2005

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for March 2005

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for March 2005. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for February 2005:

- Met with Patricia Chlouber, the US Department of Education's regional representative and her deputy, Wendy Evans, regarding No Child Left Behind
- Hosted a Yellow Bus Tour for Legislators to visit a full-day kindergarten at Bryant School (Helena) along with educators from Helena and Great Falls
- Attended State of the Judiciary address by Chief Justice Karla Gray and the State of Indian Nations by Fred Matt
- Participated in a press conference on school funding with the Governor and legislative leadership
- Participated in a tobacco prevention press conference along with the Governor at Capitol High School
- Attended several hearings of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Indian Education for All
- Participated in the monthly OPI Cabinet meeting, State Land Board meeting, and weekly meetings of the Education Forum
- Gave the welcoming speech at the state Boys and Girls Club luncheon in the Capitol Rotunda
- Presented the [State of Education address](#) to the joint session of the Legislature
- Testified on a variety of education and state land bills, including HB125, OPI's K-12 funding bill; HB 47, OPI's Full Day Kindergarten bill; HB 471, a bill to eliminate the elected State Superintendent; and HB 447, the state employees pay plan bill
- Met several times with the Governor regarding legislative and education issues
- Participated in the Inaugural Ball along with her husband Bill and other executive branch officials
- Met with Reno Charette, the Governor's Coordinator of Indian Affairs
- Hosted "Lunch with Linda" for OPI staff
- Spoke to Montana PTA on education and legislative issues
- Spoke to the Title I Conference in Great Falls, where she presented a Milken Award to Vicky Panasuk of Sidney
- Participated in a Focus Group with the College Board regarding AP classes
- Did several interviews with reporters from print, television and radio

State of Education Address

"It is our mission to advocate, communicate, educate and be accountable to those we serve."

The complete text for State Superintendent McCulloch's State of Education Address is available on the web at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Supt/NewsStories/0594CFA4EE.nclk>.

Thank you to the students and teachers in Montana classrooms who watched the address live.

A video stream copy of the address will be available later this month on the web.

OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or jlombardi@mt.gov.

OPI Legislative Updates

The OPI legislative team is keeping a close eye on more than 400 bills that deal with education matters and actively answering Legislators' questions to help them with their task to define quality education and fund K-12 schools. OPI has created a [Legislative page](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Superintendent/LegUpdates05.html), <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Superintendent/LegUpdates05.html> to help keep you informed on education issues in the Legislature. This page serves as quick reference to finding bills, education committee meetings, updates on OPI bills, video streaming and more.

OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi, jlombardi@mt.gov or 444-1641

Legislative Yellow School Bus Tour Visits Full Day Kindergarten

Members of the Senate and House Education Committees visited a full-time kindergarten class at Bryant Elementary School in Helena on February 2, 2005. Superintendent McCulloch's Yellow School Bus Tours are an informal way to learn about the current situations and diverse needs of schools across Montana. If you would like to be kept informed about full-time kindergarten via our listserv, contact Jan Lombardi, jlombardi@mt.gov or 444-1641.

Kind Acts Foundation

Since its official "Kickoff" in Montana last October with the State Superintendent, the Kind Acts Foundation has recognized 774 students from 26 states. If you want to recognize a student for a good deed or have a good idea that you want to share with others, contact the foundation at www.kindacts.org. For more information contact: DaveHall@KindActs.org.

March Board of Public Education Meeting Topics

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting March 10-11, 2005, at its office building, 2500 Broadway, Helena. Agenda information items from the Office of Public Instruction include: the Superintendent's Report, a No Child Left Behind Update, the Annual School Nutrition Report, a Healthy Schools Network recommendation, and Assessment and Accreditation updates. Agenda action items include Accreditation issues. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-0300 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

Assessment

The February 2005 issue of **JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter**, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Feb05AssessNews.pdf>.

Opportunity for Montana Districts to Field

School Districts in Montana are offered the opportunity to field test the Measured Progress test, Progress Towards Standards, for grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 in May 2005. The item statistics from the Montana field test will be used to select common forms for 2006. Measured Progress will incur all costs related to this field test. It is a good opportunity for the off-grades to take a small pilot (one or two, 45-minute test sessions) and be paid \$2 per student by Measured Progress. More information will sent to school districts as OPI learns more details. OPI Contact: Judy Snow, 444-3656, jsnow@mt.gov.

School Budgeting and Accounting

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets For FY 2005-06

Budget Data Sheets containing certified ANB and other budgeting information for FY2005-06 were posted on the OPI website on March 1. A booklet about budgeting called "FY2005-06 General Fund Overview and Worksheets," and several other budgeting resources are posted on the OPI website at [http:// www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/budget.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/budget.html) . OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@mt.gov.

Audits

1) FY2003-04 Audit deadlines

A-133 "Federal" audits for FY 2003-04 are due to OPI by March 31, 2005. This affects districts and cooperatives that spent over \$500,000 of federal money (including USDA commodities) during FY 2003-04. For districts and cooperatives that spent less than \$500,000 of federal funds and received at least \$200,000 of revenue under all sources during that year, audits for FY 2003-04 are due June 30, 2005.

2) FY2004-05 Audits and GASB 34 Requirements

Audited financial statements must comply with national reporting requirements passed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) under Statement No. 34. For more information about GASB 34, see the School Finance website's GASB 34 webpage at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>. OPI Contact: Denise Ulberg, (406) 444-0783 or dulberg@mt.gov.

MASBO Plans Budget Workshops

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold day-long, "hands-on" budget workshops in 2 locations during March. Workshops are scheduled for March 9 in Great Falls and March 14 in Billings. Participants should bring their district's budget data to work through the general fund budget during the session using manual worksheets. Presenters will be MASBO members and OPI staff members. There is a charge for the workshop. Contact Lynda Brannon, MASBO Executive Director, at (406) 442-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com to register.

Technology Fund and Flexibility Fund – Elections?

Technology Fund—At this time, OPI does not know if there will be any timber production money available for technology state payments for next year. OPI will receive notice of the amount available, if any, in July or August of 2005. Districts may ask for voter approval for a limited Technology Fund levy under 20-9-533, MCA, or may continue to levy in FY2005-06 if a technology levy election was already approved in a previous year, assuming no related changes are made in the Legislature.

Flexibility Fund—The legislature has not, at this point, appropriated any money for the Flex Fund for FY 2005-06. Consequently, districts will not be allowed to ask for voter approval for a Flexibility Fund levy because law restricts the voted levy to a percentage of the state's payment, which is estimated at zero. (20-9-544, MCA). OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@mt.gov.

Budget Amendments for Increased Enrollment

Based on the recent Spring Enrollment Count, districts with more than a 6% enrollment increase over the FY 2003-04 average enrollment counts may be eligible for additional direct state aid. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov.

Indirect Cost Applications

Applications for indirect cost rates for FY2005-06 will be mailed to schools by the end of March and will be due to OPI in May. Indirect cost rates are OPTIONAL, but a district must have a rate approved by OPI each year in order to draw indirect cost recoveries off state and federal grants. (NOTE: Districts accumulating unused sick and vacation leave obligations for federally paid employees should use an indirect cost rate, since federal regulations do not allow termination payouts using direct charges to grants but do allow payouts from the indirect cost pool.) OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.

School Elections Calendar and Handbook

1) Calendar for May 3, 2005, Election:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/2005Calendar.pdf>

2) The School Election Handbook, which was written as a collaborative effort between the Office of Public Instruction, MT Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), the Office of the Secretary of State, has been recently updated and is posted on the OPI website

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/SchoolFinance/forms/ElecHandbook.pdf>

OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov.

FY2005-06 Tuition Rates

The tentative maximum regular education tuition rates for attendance during FY 2005-06 will be about 2.10% more than the past year's rates, assuming the inflationary adjustment instituted by the 2003 Legislative are upheld. The Legislature is considering several proposals that offer higher entitlement rates that would result in higher tuition rates. Districts will be notified of the final rates after the funding levels are determined. See previous year tuition rates at:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/Tuition/FY2005.pdf>

OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@mt.gov.

Pupil Transportation -- 1st Semester Transportation Payments in March

OPI will distribute the 1st semester state transportation payments on March 25, 2005. When the payment is made, OPI will email each district and County Superintendent stating that a payment advice has been posted on the web showing the amount paid by the state and due to be paid by each county. The County Superintendent should then order the payment of the county transportation aid. The second semester payment will be made in June. 1st Semester TR-5's and TR-6's that were received by OPI after the February 15 deadline will be paid with the second semester transportation reimbursement in June.

OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@mt.gov.

Impact Aid and Retirement Costs

In February, the U.S. District Court took final action in the matter of the Indian Impact Schools of Montana v. the State of Montana. As a result of the order, districts with employees paid from the Impact Aid Fund must pay the employer's share of the retirement, social security, and unemployment insurance ("retirement") costs for those employees from the Retirement Fund. The order applies to all of fiscal year 2005. Instructions were emailed to all districts February 22 to help them implement the order. You can read that message at:

http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail/B86E43AE-3B9ACA00-01C9A3B5?WasRead=1.

Legislative action is currently pending to amend state law to comply with the federal court ruling.

OPI Contact: Tal Redpath, (406) 444-3024 or redpath@mt.gov.

Microsoft Settlements – Accounting Advice

Districts that receive money from the settlement of the Microsoft lawsuit should consider the following accounting procedures. OPI suggests school districts either: 1) Deposit the money into

the fund which made the original expenditures using Miscellaneous Revenue source 1900; or 2) Deposit the money into Fund 15, use revenue source 1900 Miscellaneous Revenue, and assign a unique 3-digit project reporter code. (This is how e-Rate refunds are treated.) There appears to be no restriction in law prohibiting the deposit of settlement money into the Technology or Flex funds, but the school district probably would have to adopt a budget amendment in FY05 to spend it in those budgeted funds, or wait until FY 06 to build it into the budget. OPI does not recommend abatement of expenditures using the settlement moneys.
OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@mt.gov.

Fiscal Services Division

Carryover for the ESEA Title programs included in the Federal Consolidated Application (FCA) is available to districts and can be requested from the OPI using the Cash Advance Request form. Approved budget pages in the consolidated application are being modified to include carryover amounts. OPI will notify districts through official e-mail once we have completed the budget modifications. Even if you have not yet received an e-mail notification, carryover is available to districts and may be requested. If you have questions regarding the carryover, please contact the appropriate grant accountant listed on the budget page for each program. You may access your application at any time at <http://data.opi.state.mt.us/FCA/>. The file with the .exe extension has been compressed for faster download – updated no later than 5:00 p.m. every Friday. OPI Contact: Julia Dilly, 406-444-4523, or jdilly@mt.gov.

Accreditation Division

Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plan (5 YCEP) Effectiveness Report

In order to comply with the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), OPI must finalize the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for 2005 prior to the start of the 2005-2006 school year. To meet this timeframe, OPI is requiring schools/districts to submit the 5 YCEP Effectiveness Reports to the Office of Public Instruction by June 17, 2005.

As you know, the Effectiveness Report is an essential part of the AYP Small Schools Process, and it requires time to review and analyze data and progress toward meeting school/district goals. The OPI recognizes that this is a narrow time frame to complete the school/district Effectiveness Report. Because of the time sensitive nature of this work, OPI will provide three options for submitting the 2005 Effectiveness Report. The three options for this year are: 1) schools may submit last year's report, 2) amend or modify last year's report, or 3) submit a new report.

In addition, the OPI will provide multiple technical assistance opportunities in late spring. Information on the technical assistance will be forthcoming. OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles, (406) 444-0716 or mbowles@mt.gov.

Montana-Prepared First Year Teacher Survey

The Montana Office of Public Instruction was the recipient of one of the five McAuliffe Educator Explorer grants awarded by the Council for Chief State School Officers. This award allows Montana to identify the professional development needs of Montana-prepared beginning teachers. The data gathering process is the first step in identifying early teachers' professional development needs. The Office of Public Instruction requests that Montana-prepared first year teachers and their supervising administrators complete a Web-based survey to assess the professional preparation, readiness, and future development needs of our first year teachers. The information from this survey will be used in two ways:

- To determine the professional development needs of new teachers
- To provide feedback to the colleges and universities that have prepared these individuals

This survey and data analysis process was developed in cooperation with the Montana education stakeholders in the interest of improving preparation, mentoring, and professional development support of new teachers. All the information provided by teachers and administrators will be kept confidential, and any survey results shared by the OPI with institutions of higher education will not include any information identifying teachers, administrators, or districts. This is an information gathering tool; it is not to be used as an instrument for teacher evaluation.

The survey will be posted on the OPI Web site the end of April or early May. More information will be forthcoming from OPI. Complete and accurate data on all new teachers entering the profession in Montana is essential to the success of this project.

OPI Contacts: Margaret Bowles, (406) 444-0716, mbowles@mt.gov or Linda Peterson, (406) 444-5726, lpeterson@mt.gov

Competitive Technology Grants for High Poverty/High Need School Districts

The ESEA Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education through Technology (Ed Tech) provides funding for competitive technology grants to eligible districts. The application, including eligibility (updated as information from districts is made available to the OPI) and updated application information, is currently available on the OPI web site at:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdTech/Index.html>. Completed grants must be postmarked to the OPI by April 18, 2005.

Eligibility for the grants is highly focused by the No Child Left Behind legislation. Eligible districts are high poverty districts with a Title I program in need of improvement or in corrective action, or a high poverty district with high technology need (defined in the application). Eligible districts are encouraged to contact the OPI as needed for assistance with the application process. OPI Contact: Michael Hall, (406) 444-4422 or mhall@mt.gov.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

The 2005 Career and Technical Student Organizations' State Leadership Conferences are scheduled for March and April. Approximately 5,000 Montana high school and postsecondary students and their advisors will be participating in one or more of the following conferences. We extend our thanks to school and district administrators for allowing their students and faculty the opportunity to participate in these activities.

Business Professionals of America (BPA) – March 6-8, Great Falls

DECA – March 6-8, Great Falls

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) – March 17-19, Billings

FFA – April 6-9, Bozeman

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) – March 13-15, Great Falls

SkillsUSA – April 4-6, Havre

Technology Student Association (TSA) – April 18-19, Dillon

OPI Contacts: Karla Beagles, 444-9019 or Valerie French, 444-9076

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division
Gifted & Talented Grant Writing Workshop

April 6, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Billings Holiday Inn, Lewis & Clark Room

The Gifted and Talented Professional Development Program and the Office of Public Instruction will again host a grant writing workshop. The workshop will guide participants through the process of writing the state Gifted & Talented grant. Bring your ideas and grant forms. There will be 6 OPI renewal units available. There is no cost, but you must register. To register, contact Stephanie Smith, 3091 S. Daffodil, Billings, MT 59102, Phone: 406-652-3720, Cell: 406-672-5032, Fax: 406-652-5834, Email: answersplus@imt.net.

Don't Miss Your Chance to Participate in Gifted and Talented Program for 2005-2006

Any school district that intends to participate in the state Gifted and Talented Program for 2005-2006 must register its interest with OPI by March 9, 2005. As of that date, available state grants will be prorated among the districts intending to participate. OPI plans to mail the 2005-2006 application packet and notification of grant award on March 25. The one-page Intent to Participate form is available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/gifted/06intentParticipate.pdf>.

First Grade Academy

June 20-23, 2005

Holiday Inn Grand Montana

Billings, Montana

The First Grade Academy is a professional development opportunity specifically designed to address first grade reading. It is open to all Montana first grade teachers. The cost is \$150.00 per participant (includes materials, breakfast, and lunch). Online registration and information can be found at <http://btc.montana.edu/conf>. OPI Contacts: Courtney Peterson, 406-247-3846, copeterson@mt.gov or Barb Johnson, 406-247-3863, bajohnson@mt.gov.

Supplemental Educational Services Clarifications

Any school or district in Montana that is not identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring may become an approved provider of Supplemental Educational Services (SES) under Title I Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act. These are after-school tutoring programs. If you have a school or district not identified for improvement that would like to become an approved provider, we invite you to complete and submit the application posted on the Title I Part A page of OPI's website. The direct link is <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/titleI>. A school not identified for improvement could be a provider to other schools in the district that are identified for improvement, whether or not the district itself is identified for improvement. OPI Contact: BJ Granbery, Educational Opportunity and Equity, bgranbery@mt.gov, 406-444-4420

Montana Indian Education Conference: April 2-5, 2005

The 24th Annual Montana Indian Education Conference will be held April 2 – April 5 at the Red Lion Colonial Inn in Helena. Nationally-known keynote speakers Susan Shown Harjo, Howard Rainer, and Dawn Smith will present, along with dozens of regional and local educators. Registration forms for the conference are available on the MIEA website, www.mtiea.org or from Stan Juneau, MIEA, Box 55 Browning MT 59417, 338-5689.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Coordinated School Health Unit

School Discipline Data Collection

This is a reminder to school district administrators that the school discipline data collection will be winding down with the end of the school year. The due date for the collection is June 30, 2005. The electronic application for entering school discipline (student suspensions and expulsions) has been open all year and many school districts have been entering data on a regular basis throughout the year. Information on the data collection may be found on the OPI Web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/safeschools/index.html>, click on School Discipline Data Collection Training. There are several resources listed. The instruction manual will provide written instructions for reporting school discipline data. The step-by-step guide is an instructional video that walks through the electronic application. There are also CD copies of the step-by-step guide available from the OPI if you cannot access the on-line version.

OPI has received a number of questions concerning the number of victims to report for a specific incident. In order to clarify the process, a definition for the term "victim" has been developed. For purposes of reporting school discipline data, a victim is an individual who suffers physical or emotional injury, loss or death because of a voluntary act by another person. Although a large population within a school may be inconvenienced by an action such as a bomb threat or lock down, students are not considered victims unless an action affects them personally, in a substantial and negative way. By the same manner, a suspension as a result of harassment/bullying will always have at least one victim. For questions or problems concerning the school discipline data collection, contact Marion Erp at 444-1951 (merp@mt.gov) or Pat Reichert at 444-4430 (preichert@mt.gov).

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

The 2005 YRBS was completed by grade 7-12 students in participating districts during the week of February 21. The first week of May is the targeted date for online availability of school-specific data at www.opi.mt.gov/YRBS. Past years' data and trend data are also available for your school at this website. For questions about the YRBS contact Susan Court, OPI, at 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

HIV/AIDS/STD Program

HIV/AIDS Teacher Training

An HIV/AIDS Teacher Training is an excellent educational opportunity for fulfilling PIR day requirements. The one-day training offers information on educational and work site safety policy that is recommended knowledge for all K-12 educators (particularly health enhancement and FACS), bus drivers, school food staff, custodians, playground aides, and other school staff. Renewal units good toward educator licensure are provided through this training. To arrange a FREE training at your school, contact Susan Court, OPI, at 406-444-3178 or scourt@mt.gov.

School Nutrition Unit

The USDA visits Montana! Darlene Barnes, the regional USDA administrator, will visit Hellgate Elementary in Missoula in March. The visit is to promote National School Breakfast Week 2005 (March 7-11, 2005). This year's National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) theme is "School Breakfast: Great Performances!" If your school would like a National School Breakfast Week kit full of useful ideas and yummy recipes, contact: Montana Team Nutrition Program, kbark@mt.gov, (406) 994-5641 or School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Best Practice Nominations Needed by March 15

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs nominations for the 2005 “Best Practices Awards” in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Schools must nominate themselves or other schools for these awards. The USDA will recognize outstanding practices in four categories: 1) Reaching Needy Children in the Summer, 2) Increasing School Breakfast Program Access, 3) Increasing the Consumption of Fruits/Vegetables and/or Whole Grains; and, 4) Healthy School Nutrition Environment. Schools that receive these awards are recognized nationally. The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2005. If you would like to nominate a school (or school district – especially yours!) for one of these awards, please contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

School Food Service Conference – June 21-23, 2005

Foodservice managers, mark your calendars! The Montana School Nutrition Association in cooperation with the School Nutrition Programs of the Office of Public Instruction is hosting the Summer School Food Service Conference at the Holiday Inn in Great Falls on June 21-23, 2005. This three day conference provides high-quality professional development opportunities for directors, managers, supervisors, cooks, and general assistants. The conference also features a vendor trade show and the opportunity for managers to network with peers from around Montana. A conference registration brochure will be mailed to schools this spring. For more information: Montana School Nutrition Association, Carol Simanton, (406) 674-5432, h2ohlr@ttc-cmc.net

HACCP & FOOD SAFETY: New Requirements from the USDA

Congress passed new food safety requirements for school food service programs as part of the 2004 Child Nutrition Act. These requirements are:

1. Two health inspections of a school kitchen are required each year. (One inspection has been the requirement up until now.)
2. School food service programs must implement a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system beginning July 1, 2005.

The USDA has not yet provided further guidance to OPI, but an update is expected in the next few months. Further guidance will be given to schools as it is received from the USDA. Currently, School Nutrition Programs plans to provide HACCP training beginning in the summer of 2005. Additional training sessions will be provided throughout the 2005-06 school year.

As a first step, School Nutrition Programs encourages school food service personnel to attend *ServSafe* food safety training (if not currently certified.) This is the first step to understanding the concepts of a HACCP program. *ServSafe* training sessions are offered locally through county sanitarians, MSU Extension Service, Sysco, and Food Services of America. *ServSafe* Training will be offered at the Great Falls School Food Service Summer Conference on June 21, 2005. For more information, contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501 or Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641

The Commodity/Bid Committee

The Commodity/Bid Committee will meet in Miles City, Great Falls and Missoula during the week of March 21-25, 2005. The committee includes school food service personnel from 30 districts from around the state. Committee members give input on foods ordered for the Cooperative Bid Program, commodities available, and the types of processing (example: making hamburger into patties) that they would like for commodity foods. The group meets in each of the 3 regions in the fall and spring and together during School Nutrition Program/Montana School Food Service Association summer conference. For more information

or to request a copy of the informational brochure on the Cooperative Bid Program: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

Defeating Diabetes: Part 4; April 15 in Billings and April 29 in Great Falls

This conference is a continuation of a series of trainings that were started by the Team Nutrition Program in the 2003-04 school year. This is a one-day conference for community members, schools, parents, diabetes educators, health professionals and public agencies on and/or near American Indian reservations; sponsored by the Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program and Montana Team Nutrition. See what Montana Native communities and national programs are doing to prevent diabetes and obesity, focusing on nutrition and physical activity. If you are interested in attending this workshop or would like more information: Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, Ninia Baehr, (406) 994-5686, niniab@montana.edu

Three \$5000 Grants Available from Western Dairy Council

Western Dairy Council will award three \$5,000 grants to an organization or individual proposing innovative, community-based nutrition education programs aimed at empowering kids to become advocates for healthy eating, including three servings of dairy a day and an active lifestyle, which contribute to a healthy weight. Deadline for filing is May 13. Three \$5000 grants will be awarded. You can download the grant packet at www.wdairycouncil.com. Contact: Western Dairy Council, Judy Barbe, MS, RD, (307) 472-1830, www.wdairycouncil.com

Funding Available for Farm to School Projects

The 2005 Community Food Projects (CFP) request for applications (RFA) is now available on the USDA/CSREES web site at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1080>. Direct assistance and one-on-one mentoring is available for CFP applicants applying for funding related to farm to school programs. For more information, please visit www.farmtoschool.org or contact: Anupama Joshi, National Farm to School Program Manager, (323) 341-5095, ajoshi@oxy.edu

Eat Smart, Play Hard Materials

Six new activity sheets are now available featuring the Power Panther and the "Eat Smart, Play Hard" logo. Ideal for educators of 8-10 year olds, these activity sheets focus on snacking, breakfast, physical activity, and balancing food and play. Use these tools as part of nutrition education sessions in school, child care and recreational programs, and as a take-home project. These entertaining educational tools engage and inform kids using interactive games, puzzles, kid-friendly recipes, jokes and tips. To view and download:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/collection/kids_activity.html. To order hard copies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/orderform.htm>.

OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

New Resources Available from Montana Team Nutrition

For school board members, school administrators, nutrition leaders in your schools:

Healthy Students Learn More: the Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Montana Schools showcases Montana schools which have taken action to assure that nutrition and physical activity are part of students' daily routines. School food service staff involvement is crucial in providing healthy foods, role modeling healthy behaviors, and providing nutrition education. You have an important job- nourishing our youth! This resource has great examples of school food services' opportunities to improve nutrition throughout the entire school system. Guidance for change and steps to get started are included in the booklet, as well as a complete list of nutrition, physical activity, and school wellness resources.

For educators, and school food service personnel or high school newspaper staff:

Eat to Be Fit Informational Handouts: Montana Team Nutrition Program's newest resource is designed to provide accurate nutrition information to teens on hot nutrition topics. These are twelve double-sided handouts cover a variety of information from snacks, breakfast, weight management, supplements to sports nutrition and portion size. They can be used as a supplement to nutrition instruction, or for a basis of a bulletin board or newspaper article. This resource will be on OPI's Health Enhancement website soon. It can also be obtained from the Montana Team Nutrition Program. If you are interested in receiving a copy of these resources, please contact: Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641, kbark@mt.gov

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education Unit

Annual Traffic Education Conference

Registration information for the April 24-26 conference in Billings is available online at www.opi.state.mt.us/driveder, and it is being mailed to all Montana traffic education teachers through the Montana Traffic Education Association spring newsletter.

Contact Jim Carroll, Montana Traffic Education Executive Secretary at (406) 278-3285.

Advanced Driver Education—Montana D.R.I.V.E.

Specialized behind-the-wheel school bus training is available at the OPI-sponsored advanced driver education workshops each summer. The program is being renamed Montana D.R.I.V.E., for Driver In-Vehicle Education. Watch for information with this name to be mailed to your school. Registration for summer one-day workshops is available at www.opi.state.mt.us/advdriver.

OPI Contact Fran Penner-Ray, 406-444-4432, fpenner-ray@mt.gov

Zoo Montana Survey regarding Distance Learning

ZooMontana's Education Department is partnering with MSU's College of Technology in Billings, with the goal of extending the reach of its outreach programs using "Distance Learning". Zoo Montana has prepared a brief questionnaire to help them identify what might be useful to schools and would be delighted if any interested educators could fill out the survey. The survey is located at: http://www.zoomontana.org/education/distance_survey.html

Contact: Catherine Lynch, Education Director, ZooMontana, clynch@zoomontana.org, (406) 652-8100 ext. 2

Montana Council for Exceptional Children

2005 TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Montana Council for Exceptional Children recognizes the exemplary services provided by many Montana teachers and has established a process to recognize a "Teacher of the Year."

Award Criteria:

- The recipient must be currently involved in the provision of direct services to disabled and/or gifted and talented students.
- The recipient should have demonstrated exemplary performance over a period of time as a teacher (or provider of direct services) exhibiting such qualities as innovativeness, imagination, creativity, and ability to inspire as indicated by achievements clearly recognized by members of the profession and others knowledgeable of the candidate.
- The recipient must be a member of CEC and should be an appropriately qualified teacher or related service specialist as recognized by state and professional authorities.

- A short letter of nomination with a description of the nominee's outstanding professional contribution in the delivery of direct services is required, along with one to five (1-5) letters of support for the nomination from supervisors, parents, other teachers, etc.

Recipients of the Teacher of the Year Award, the Distinguished Service Award, and the Public Service Award will be recognized on Friday, April 15, during the 2005 MCEC Conference on Diverse Abilities at the Billings Holiday Inn Grand. Nominations for awards must be received by March 18, 2005. Send your nominations to Bob Stansberry, MCEC Past President, c/o Carroll College, 1601 N Benton Ave, Helena, MT 59625 or via e-mail to rstansbe@carroll.edu. You may also obtain an award nomination form online at www.mtcec.org.

"Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes"

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes seeks nominations for its 2005 awards. The Barron Prize honors young people ages 8 to 18 who have shown leadership and courage in public service to people and our planet. Each year, ten national winners each receive \$2,000 to support their service work or higher education. Nomination deadline is April 30. For more information and to nominate, visit: <http://www.barronprize.org/>

Museum of the Rockies Free in 2005 to Montana Schools

In 2005, school groups from across the state of Montana will be admitted free to the Museum of the Rockies. For schools in the Bozeman area there is also a scholarship fund that will subsidize bus transportation costs that schools may incur.

In order to take advantage of the free admission, schools simply need to call the museum at 994-6618 to make reservations. More information is also available at www.museumoftherockies.org. All trips for schools groups can include guided tours, planetarium shows, the living history farm, and the Lewis & Clark challenge course, but schools must prearrange which features of the museum they want to visit.

Contact: Jamie Cornish, Ph.D., Marketing Director, Museum of the Rockies, Montana State University, 406-994-2652, fax: 406-994-2682, jcornish@montana.edu, www.museumoftherockies.org

Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum: 2005 Teacher Fellowship Program

The Teacher Fellowship Program at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum provides educators from across the United States an opportunity to study the events of April 19, 1995, and the resulting universal applications that are pertinent for classroom use across the curriculum.

The goals for the Teacher Fellowship Program are for participants to understand the impact of violence, learn to make the world safer and learn to use an incident like the bombing of the Murrah Building and apply its lessons universally. The Memorial will select fifteen (15) teachers as Memorial Fellows to participate in the inaugural Teacher Fellowship Program, which will be held June 13 – 16, 2005, at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. Travel expenses, food and lodging for Memorial Fellows will be provided by the Memorial. Fellows may receive a small stipend following their creation, use and documentation of classroom curriculum resulting from their participation in this program. The intent of this program is to reach beyond Oklahoma to assist teachers in teaching the lessons of April 19, 1995. For this reason, Oklahoma teachers

are not eligible for the Fellowship Program, but are encouraged to apply to attend the Education Summit. The curriculum for the Teacher Fellowship Program is geared to social studies. However, the Memorial will entertain applications from educators in all disciplines. This program made possible through the generous support of JPMorganChase. For more information, go to http://www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org/sear_deta.htm?id=2848241

The Memorial also sponsors an annual essay contest, which is open to students in grades 5 – 12. In the past the Memorial has only accepted entries from Oklahoma students. This year, the tenth anniversary of the bombing, the Memorial is extending an invitation to students from other states to participate as well. For more information, go to www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org, look under Education programs.

Grade 7-12 Teachers Eligible for Presidential Award

Please nominate and encourage good science and mathematics teachers to apply for this award, which was established in 1983 and is administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation. Teachers of grades 7-12 are eligible to apply for the 2005 award but may not be self-nominated. Anyone (e.g., principals, teachers, students, and other members of the general public) may nominate a teacher. Teachers' completed applications for the 2005 awards must be postmarked by May 2, 2005. Nomination forms, eligibility requirements and applications are available at <http://www.nsf.paemst.org/AppPkts.cfm> or from OPI contact Sharon Mikat, 406-444-0906 or smikat@mt.gov.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) identifies outstanding mathematics and science teachers across the country from kindergarten through 12th grade. If chosen by the national selection committee, awardees receive a special citation signed by the President of the United States, a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF), gifts from donors, and a paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. in March to attend special recognition events.